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Pope Gregory VII: A Church Reformer



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Professor Lowe
Western Oregon University
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By the time that Hildebrand was appointed Pope Gregory VII, the Church was in dire need of change and direction. The monastery had become a religious center for the ignorant and frequently barbaric inhabitant of the surrounding countryside serving, through an increasingly elaborate liturgy, as the intercessory for lay society with the Savior and the saints favored in the local area.¹ His biggest accomplishment was to bring and end to lay investiture, but was this change really to better the Church. Through research I hope to find what led Gregory to make these changes and if they were in his jurisdiction to make.

When examining Gregory's pontificate, the most important policy of Gregory's was his desire to ending lay investiture. The most important document that was written by Gregory came in 1075 and is known as the *Dictatus Papae* which is a compilation of 27 axiomatic statements of powers arrogated to the Pope. Another element of Gregory's pontificate that stands out is the Investiture Controversy that occurred in 1077. This controversy had involved both Gregory and King Henry IV of Germany.

Gregory had been greatly influenced through life and he would take these influences and apply them to how he handled everything that came to him as Pope. I am going to be examining these influences and hope to get a better understanding on why he made the decisions that he did and if the Church was truly better when he passed away.

Background of Church

Several years before the appointment of Pope Gregory VII, the Church and State were in crisis. "The crisis, at least in its fully developed and decisive stage, took the form

¹Norman F. Cantor. "The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050-1130," *The American Historical Review* (Vol. 66, No. 1, Oct., 1960): 48.

of the Gregorian reform movement and the investiture controversy.”² The conflict between the two had begun with a dispute between two cardinals, whose names are not known, over simony, the practice of buying spiritual “services.” Along with that the crisis also had a great amount to do with the matter of lay investiture.

The beginning of the Church’s crisis reached back into the late 10th century in the area of Northern Italy. “New ascetic concerns and novel eremitic tendencies began to come to the forefront of religious life.”³ These feelings would continue to grow and would be deep in the religious life of Northern Italy for the following centuries. It was felt that the now prevailing Benedictine life was falling short of the monastic idea.

Sir Peter Damian, an early leader of Church reform, was disturbed that the Cluny’s wealth had grown too large and that the Cluniacs needed to return to abstinence, a practice needed if they were to achieve apostolic perfection. This early reform would lead to an even greater reform movement, The Gregorian Reform movement, which was rightly named because to of the major Popes involved in this movement had taken on the name of Gregory. Norman Cantor described that the reformers wanted to free the Church from all state control and separate the interference of laymen and rid lay investiture. They “intended to create a homogeneous new world order in the form of papal domination not only over churchmen but also over all secular rulers and hence over Western society.”⁴

Lay investiture was the appointment of bishops, abbots and other church officials. Investing a candidate also involved giving him a pastoral staff, a ring and during the ceremony the grateful new bishop received his title to a complex of lavish feudal estates, in turn did his homage to the ruler which signified that he was a vassal of the king as well

² Cantor, 55

³ Ibid 51

⁴ Ibid, 55

as a prelate of the church. It was obvious that the greater loyalty was held to the local lord rather than to the pope or even the Church as it is a universal communion.

According to Robert Louis Wilken, “the capital fact of ecclesiastical life in the early Middle Ages was the affairs of the Church were managed by kings and Princes.”⁵ It was thought that it was the king’s duty to involve himself in the Church’s governance. They were given their right and authority upon their coronation. This had been widely accepted by the people and the missionaries had come to realize that “the way to reach the people was through the mind and heart of the king [...]”⁶ Kings and princes soon became the main contributors to the Church’s banks and the main defenders to it. Even with this the Church had come to object kings and nobles naming bishops or abbots. This might have something to do with the bishop or abbot becoming a vassal, owing homage to that king as a way to repay their debt of being elected to their position. The Church was concerned that if there was ever a conflict between the king and the Church then the bishop or abbot would more likely pay their homage to the king rather than the Church. Along with this opponents thought it to be a scandalous mongering of spiritual gods while defenders deemed it a purchase of land. A question that had risen in correlation to investiture was whose authority was greater, the king or the Church. In theory, the clergy representing heavenly power was higher than the nobility, who represented earthly power. But even with this question in minds of the clergy and the nobility, many kings had become dependent upon the clergy for communication and political advice, therefore the persons acting in this capacity occupied an important position in the state. Along with

⁵ Robert Wilken, “Gregory VII and the Politics of the Spirit,” *First Things; A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*. Vol. 89 (1999):3

⁶ Ibid, 3

this, the clergy naturally saw their roles as defending the powers of the church at the expense of the powers of the king.

Lay investiture quickly became the focal point for the struggle between the church authority and the secular authority. The question that came under scrutiny was whether or not the king had the final authority to his state? Shouldn't a monarch have the right to chose a man he trusted to be his adviser and spiritual head of his kingdom? "The Gregorian's wanted not only to free the Church completely from state control and from interference by laymen, but also to divest Western kingship of the quasi-sacramental character it had been able to use since the eighth century."⁷

As I mentioned before, a common belief with lay investiture, at least in the Church's eyes, was the kings were appointing bishops and abbots so that it will benefit themselves and not the church in the long run. But is this something that is really true? For years kings and lesser have been the ones to source a majority of the Church's funds. They even paid for the majority of the building of Church's on their land, it only seemed right that they should be able to elect the ones to govern these Church's at least in the State's eyes. "Kings and lesser magnates, accustomed to the idea of owning and controlling churches upon their domains, thought it naturally to claim similar rights over the sees and religious houses they had in many cases founded or endowed and of which in any case they were the protectors."⁸ The kings wanted to project that if they hadn't been the ones to front these Churches than they most likely wouldn't be there, so they should have some say as to who and how they might be run.

⁷ Cantor, 55

⁸ Brian Tierney, Donald Kagan, and L. Pearce Williams, eds. *Gregory VII- Church Reformer or World Monarch?* (New York: Random House Inc, 1967): 7

Gregorian Reform

The predecessors of Gregory began to mount an active campaign of reform that had a focus of simony, which was the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices. They had also focused on ending clerical marriages, something they felt had encouraged seeking office for a financial gain that was offered to the bishop's family. Gregorian reform ideas had been showing glimpse toward the end of the 10th century, but truly had taken shape until Gratian was elected Pope Gregory VI in 1045. The reform movement continued to grow greatly with each new emerging Pope and lasted well into the early 12th century. Many events and ideas formed the movement. William Ziezulewicz believed that "Gregorian Reform originated in a spiritual movement, or an attitude which had a profound impact on the Christian West by the eleventh century."⁹

In 1049, celibacy returned to being mandatory for all of the clergy. Ten years later, Pope Nicholas II chose to make a change to election. He convened the Lateran Council which legislated the new procedures for the election of the pope, specifying that popes should be elected by a vote of cardinals, especially cardinal bishops. "By placing election of the new pope solely in the hands of the cardinals, the new rules effectively excluded the emperor or a powerful king from controlling the election of the Pope,"¹⁰ something that would obviously anger the kings. Though this decree was greatly supported, putting it into effect would be of no easy matter. Nicholas II called for the help of the Norman Army, and was able to disorganize the Roman nobles, who had for personal gain of their families had sometimes elected popes. Pope Alexander II, who succeeded Nicholas, had faced trouble from the Roman Nobles, who had made a small

⁹ William Ziezulewicz. Abbatial Elections at Saint Florent-De-Saumur (Ca. 950-1118), *Church History*. (Vol. 57, Issue 3, 1998): 289.

¹⁰ Wilken, 29

comeback since Nicholas' time. But Alexander had insisted they would have nothing to do with the election of a pope. This was to be supported by the reformers Peter Damien and by Hildebrand.

The age of the Gregorian reform quickly became much more than a world revolution which might easily be compared to those of modern history like the Communist revolution of the twentieth century. This revolution showed the emergence of a "new ideology that rejects the results of several centuries of development, organized into the prevailing system, and calls for a new right order in the world."¹¹ In Marvin R. Vincent's book, *The Age of Hildebrand*, describes the age of this period as a time in "which the Papacy reaches the height of its power over the nations of Europe, as marked by the efforts of the Roman Hierarchy to control the German empire and the kingdoms of France and England."¹² The ideas that were held by the reformers had not come suddenly. Vincent describes these ideas as something that was the result of forces that had been working from the apostolic age. The reformers were just able to greatly advance these ideas.

Gregory's Early Years

Gregory was born between 1020 and 1025 in Tuscany as Hildebrand. His father was believed to either be a carpenter or a peasant and it is unclear as to what his mother's name was. At a young age Hildebrand was sent to the monastery of Santa Maria on the Aventine Hill to be educated. He was able to attend there because his maternal uncle, Laurentius presided as abbot there.

¹¹ Cantor 55

¹² Marvin R. Vincent. *The Age of Hildebrand* (New York:: The Caxton Press, 1896): V

Hildebrand's first profession in the church came at an early age when he became a Benedictine Monk at Rome. His service came under John Gratain. When Gratain had become Pope Gregory VI, he elected Hildebrand to become his chaplain. In the year 1046, Gratain was deposed by the Synod of Sutri and sent into exile and Hildebrand had followed him through the Alps and into Cologne, where he remained with until he died in 1047.

In 1049, Hildebrand met Bruno the Bishops of Toul. Bruno had made Hildebrand a cardinal-sub deacon and administrator of the Patrimony of St. Peter's. Under this position he had begun to reveal his excellence for administration. He had been able to recover Church property and revenues of the Holy See, all of which had been lost into the hands of the Roman nobility and the Normans. From this, Leo IX appointed him to monastery of St. Paul as promisor. St. Paul had become very venerable and had been facing great destitution by the bands of Champagne. "Monastic discipline was so impaired that the monks were attended in their refectory by women; and the sacred edifices were so neglected that the sheep and cattle freely roamed in and out through the broken doors."¹³ When Hildebrand arrived he quickly began rigorous reforms and was able to succeed in restoring the ancient rule of the abbey with those of its earlier times. In 1054, while Hildebrand was in France, Leo IX had passed away. The clergy and people of Rome were eager to elect Hildebrand as his successor, but rather he chose to turn it down and went in search for another, more suitable candidate. He was able to find such a candidate in Germany. His choice as candidate had been elected and assumed the name, Victor II. He had held his position for three years when he passed away in 1057. From

¹³ Thomas Oestreich, Catholic Encyclopedia (internet) "Pope St. Gregory VII," 2003, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06791c.htm> (April 23rd, 2006)

the years 1057-1073, Hildebrand worked under the guidance of four more popes, two of which included Nicholas II and Alexander II. On April 22nd, 1073, Alexander had died, leaving the Church searching for a new pope. That search was not to last long. The time at length had come when Hildebrand, who for more than 20 years had been the most prominent figure in the Church, had been chiefly instrumental in the selection of her rulers, had inspired and given purpose to her policy and who had been steadily developing and realizing by successive acts, her sovereignty and purity, should assume in his own person the majesty and responsibility of that exalted power which his genius so long directed.¹⁴

The day after the death of Alexander II, the obsequies of the deceased pontiff had begun in the Lateran Basilica. As these were going on a sudden outcry from the surrounding clergy and people shouting "Let Hildebrand is Pope!" "Blessed Peter has chosen Hildebrand the Archdeacon!" On that same day Hildebrand was conducted to the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, and was then selected in legal form by the assembled cardinals, and with due consent of the Roman clergy and amid the repeated acclamations of the people. "Hildebrand was clearly the man of the hour, his austere virtue commanded respect, his genius admiration; and the promptitude and unanimity with which he was chosen would indicate, rather, a general recognition of his fitness for the high office."¹⁵ What is interesting about Hildebrand's election was that when you examine the way in which he was appointed before lay investiture and violating the law of 1059 that made it a requirement for the assembly of cardinals to elect a Pope. That was the reasoning for

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

him to be conducted to the Church of San Pietro so swiftly. When Hildebrand was elected he assumed the name of Gregory VII, his first mentor in the Church.

Hildebrand as Pope Gregory VII

Gregory's appointment was one that was very swift and it was obvious that so many members of the Church and the citizens were confident in him becoming Pope, but there was at least one person that was not and oddly enough this was Gregory himself. This isn't more evident than in the letters that Gregory wrote to his friends shortly after his appointment. It is evident that Gregory assumed the burden of the pontificate which he felt had been thrust upon him and he only reluctantly with a great struggle of mind accepted the position. Gregory seemed to be greatly overwhelmed and a lot of this feeling had to do with the Christian World being in a deplorable condition.

Even before Gregory took his position he already seemed to have an agenda for how he wanted to make the changes to the Church. This had a lot to do with how dissatisfied he was with his predecessors and how little they were able to get done. He felt that the Church's problems stemmed from two evils, simony and clerical inconsistency. Gregory wanted to bring back more control to the Church with Church matters and lessen and even eliminate state control that might be held. The most important aspect of Gregory's agenda was to "ensure that the laity and especially lay rulers of the state would have little or nothing to do with choosing popes or bishops for nearly a millennium and still counting."¹⁶ The first thing that Gregory had to do as Pope was to secure his position in Rome. With this, he might be able to make more decisions

¹⁶ Appleby, 36

that would hold firm, something that his predecessors had a difficult time achieving. He was able to gain his position by going to Southern Ital and set treaties with Landolfo of Benevento, Richard of Capua and Gisolf of Salerno. The princes engaged themselves to defend the person of the pope and the property of the Holy See, and they were never to invest anyone with a church benefice without papal sanction. So they would be able to appoint their own choices, but they had to be approved by the Pope before any action was taken in giving out the position. This was Gregory's first action in stamping out investiture.

By the year 1074 Gregory's mind and agenda had become greatly focused on the expedition that had headed east to end the oppression of the Oriental Christians from the Seljuk Turks. This oppression came to Gregory's attention through a letter that was sent to him from the east, which had described the situation over there as "a pagan race had overcome the Christians and with horrible cruelty had devastated everything almost to the walls of Constantinople, and were now governing the conquered lands with tyrannical violence, and that they had slain many thousands of Christians as if they were but sheep."¹⁷ The slaying of thousands of Christians bothered Gregory greatly so he proposed a crusade to the east and in order to gain support, he called for the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches. He had urged Christian princes to rally in the host of Western Christendom for the defense of the Christian East. Unfortunately Gregory's mind was being pulled in other direction and the expedition came to a standstill.

¹⁷ Medieval Sourcebook (internet): *Gregory VII: Call for a "Crusade", 1074*
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/g7-cde1078.html> 1996 Accessed May 24th, 2006.

By this time Gregory had begun his long work of purifying the Church through the reformation of the clergy. His first step began with enacting four decrees at Lenten Synod in March of 1074, which is as followed:

- That clerics who had obtained any grade or office of sacred orders by payment should cease to minister in the Church.
- That no one who had purchased any Church should retain it and that no one for the future should be permitted to buy or sell ecclesiastical rights.
- That all who was guilty of incontinence should cease to exercise their sacred ministry.
- That the people should reject the ministrations of clerics who failed to obey these injunctions.¹⁸

When Gregory had passed these decrees they were met with the greatest of opposition from Italy, Germany, and France. But what Gregory seemed to be projecting through these decrees is that he was taking his position and showing the rest of the public that he was going to be very aggressive in reforming the Church and is not going to back down from anyone that steps to him. But was this an image that Gregory should be trying to portray? Yes he wanted to show that he was taken his agenda to heart and was making the changes that his predecessors had failed to do, but was there a reason that these earlier actions failed? It seems that Gregory was forcing his ideas onto everyone and that since he believed he was in the second highest position in the Church, the first being God, that he had the right to make these decisions, even if it meant angering several others.

Gregory and King Henry IV.

One of the biggest conflicts of the 11th century had occurred between Pope Gregory and King Henry. This conflict became commonly known as the “Investiture Controversy.” The conflict between the two consumed the majority of Gregory’s pontiff

¹⁸ Catholic Encyclopedia (internet)

and led to several decrees developed by Gregory. They hadn't always been in conflict with each other, particularly when Gregory was first elected. Gregory had written a letter to Godfrey of Hunchback in which he expressed that he had great hope in the King and was planning on sending him ambassadors and that the king will "hear his advice and fatherly monitions."¹⁹ He had also hoped for Henry's future and present glory.

Henry too had not wanted conflict with Gregory and in fact wanted to come to a peace with the both Gregory and the Church. He had written Gregory a letter in 1073 that expresses how he wanted the Church and State to support each other and work together rather than against one another. He states that "they must never be in dissension but must inseparably cleave to each other in the bonds of the Christ."²⁰ He also expressed his humbleness and regret for the many misdeeds that he had brought towards the Church. Some of which included his invasion of the property of the Church and his simoniacal promotions of unworthy persons. Henry had known that the state had always shown the respect to the Church that it deserves but it needed to increase in order for the two to work together. He proposed his promise of amendment for their future and even went so far as to profess his submission to the Roman See. He knew that if he did this, then he could eliminate some of the problems he was facing in Germany, which included gaining back the support of the German princes.

In 1074 Gregory's mind had moved away from the Crusade and towards the dealings of King Henry IV. Henry had not kept his promises and was now refusing to stop appointing bishops because they were the key to uniting his kingdom. It is difficult to say on why Henry made his initial promises particularly seeing that he was such a

¹⁹ J.P. Whitney. "Gregory VII," *The English Historical Review*. (Vol. 34, No. 134, Apr. 1919): 135

²⁰ Tierney, 23-24

strong supporter and often practiced investiture simony. Henry had wanted to see a reform of his own in Germany and gain back the support of his state and he felt that in order to do this, he needed the ability of investiture. Though Gregory too wanted to see reform but he wanted to see it through ridding the world of investiture and giving the power to elect solely to the Church. Obviously these reforms were in direct confliction with each other.

Gregory made the bold move of going behind the King's back and began appealing to the German princes to join him. They had been willing to acknowledge the papacy's spiritual rights with the exchange for relief of the king's oppressive policies. This move would obviously weaken Henry's agenda because he would greatly need the support of the princes if he wanted to achieve any type of reform in Germany at all.

Gregory made another bold move in the year 1075 with his register. This register would include the *Dictatus Papae*, which is a collection of dictates laid out by the Pop and would describe the powers and the rules to be carried out by the papacy. There were a total of twenty-seven dictates and are as followed:

The Dictates of the Pope

1. That the Roman church was founded by God alone.
2. That the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called universal.
3. That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops.
4. That, in a council his legate, even if a lower grade, is above all bishops and can pass sentence of deposition against them.
5. That the pope may depose the absent.
6. That, among other things, we ought not to remain in the same house with those excommunicated by him.
7. That for him alone is it lawful according to the needs of the time, to make new laws, to assemble together new congregations to make an abbey of a canonry; and on the other hand to divide a rich bishopric and unite the poor ones

8. That he alone may use the imperial insignia.
9. That of the pope alone all princes shall kiss his feet.
10. That his name alone shall be spoken in the churches.
11. That this is the only name in the world.
12. That it may be permitted to him to depose emperors.
13. That it may be permitted to transfer bishops if need be.
14. That he has power to ordain a clerk of any church he may wish.
15. That he who is ordained by him may preside over another church, but may not hold a subordinate position; and that such one may not receive a higher grade from any bishop.
16. That no synod shall be called a general one without his order.
17. That no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority.
18. That a sentence passed by him may be retracted by no one; and that he himself, alone of all, may retract it.
19. That he himself may be judged by no one.
20. That no one shall dare to condemn one who appeals to the apostolic chair.
21. That to the latter should be referred the more important cases of every church.
22. That the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity, the Scripture bearing witness.
23. That the Roman pontiff, if he have been canonically ordained, is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter; St Ennodius, bishop of Pavia, bearing witness and many holy fathers agreeing with him. As is contained in the decrees of St. Symmachus the Pope.
24. That, by his command and consent, it may be lawful for subordinates to bring accusations.
25. That he may depose and reinstate bishops without assembling a synod.
26. That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered catholic.
27. That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men.²¹

It seems that all 27 dictates reflect the power that Gregory wanted the Church to portray. Gregory wanted the Church to retain all of the power and that included being the only ones in power to elect any position within the Church. This meant stripping lay investiture from the State. To some historians there is a belief that Gregory wasn't the one to actually write the dictates and that it was actually written at a later date. But I do not agree with this assumption. Gregory's intentions as pope were never hidden and when

²¹ Ernest F. Henderson. *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1910): 366-367

one examines the Dictatus Papae, the dictates seem to correspond with Gregory's intentions. He wanted to absolve anyone of being able to appoint bishops and he did so with dictate number twenty-five. He believed that the Church is the only power that should deal with any of the Church's business and this is reflected throughout the dictates.

The Dictatus Papae was not well received particularly by King Henry. Henry viewed the dictates as taking away the rights that were passed on to him by his ancestors, rights he felt that he whole heartedly deserved as king. He thought the Pope was abusing powers and taking away the rights of others. By 1075 the relationship between Gregory and Henry came to a defining moment. Gregory issued a strongly worded condemnation of lay investiture. Henry at first accepted the condemnation but that was because he was hoping Gregory would crown him emperor. But a dispute between the two erupted in Milan over a bishop that was elected the king intervened to insure that his nominee was consecrated. Gregory sent on a letter to King Henry as a reminder that he had no authority for his election of his nominee. If "he did not comply with the decree on lay investiture he would not only be excommunicated but also deposed."²² It had always been common that a Pope could make a king an emperor, but it was rare that he would rid a king of this position. "In Gregory's view a king forfeited his throne if he opposed apostolic decrees issued from Rome."²³ But Henry continued to appoint his own bishops even after the letter from Gregory.

Henry summoned a council filled with German bishops, bishops that had refused to follow Gregory and his imperious demands. The council had called for a

²² Wilken, 29.

²³ Ibid, 29

denouncement of Gregory “as an immoral perfidious abuser of papal power.”²⁴ Henry sent on a letter to Gregory that had called for the removal of Gregory from his office that said: “I Henry, King by grace of God will all of my bishops, say to you, come down, come down, and be damned throughout the ages.”²⁵ Gregory had retaliated and using his own set power laid out in the *Dictatus Papae*, pronounced Henry IV deposed of his position and excommunicated him for good measure. It seems that Gregory had set up his power through the *Papae* and quickly used it to show that he was serious when it came to the dictates.

Gregory’s decision had not pleased Henry to say the least. He believed that he was king by divine right and claimed this to his kingdom. He then called Gregory “not a pope, but a false monk.”²⁶ Henry tried to gather up all of his bishops again to retaliate against Gregory, but he quickly failed. As mentioned earlier Gregory had gained support of the German princes, something that was to hurt Henry. It came to no surprise to Henry that the German princes backed the Pope, however he was shocked to find out that the German bishops had now deserted him in order to seek the Pope’s pardon. Henry had always felt that he would be able to count on the bishops for support, like they had earlier when Henry and Gregory’s conflict were first beginning. They had been alarmed by the excommunication so they withdrew from Henry and began supporting Gregory.

In 1077, Henry realized that he now needed to gain the support of the Pope, so he set out to Canossa, a castle where the Pope was currently staying. He went to Canossa to present himself as a penitent and obtain the Pope’s pardon. When Henry reached the

²⁴ Appleby, 37.

²⁵ Elesha Coffman. “The Humiliation of King Henry,” *Christian History and Biography*. (Issue 86, 2005): 46.

²⁶ Appelby, 37

gates of Canossa, the weather had turned fairly harsh with freezing winds and bitterly cold, falling snow. At first Gregory had refused to see Henry and had made him kneel out in the snow for three long cold days. But the humiliation would only last for those three days, “how could a priest turn away a penitent? Finally the Pope called for him, the castle doors opened and the King was granted absolution, but not however without the Pope extracting an oath from the King that he would abide by all papal decisions in the future.”²⁷ It seemed that a peace between the two had been reached and that they could embark on creating a better world. Unfortunately as soon as Henry returned to Germany, the peace that was had had quickly diminished. “The stakes of their epic battle, known as the Investiture Controversy, were simply too high.”²⁸ Henry continued to support clerics that had opposed Gregory and his reforms.

This conflict between the two would soon escalate into a war. The Pro-reform leaders of Germany had elected their own King, Rudolf. Henry quickly defeated Rudolf and then promptly stormed into Rome to elect his own pope, Clement III. Gregory reacted and for a second time excommunicated Henry in 1080. Gregory had called upon the Normans to aid him, which they did by rescuing him. Unfortunately, while aiding Gregory they destroyed Rome in the process. This had enraged those living in Rome, so they had forced Gregory into exile. Gregory died in May of 1085 in Salerno. His last words were: “I have loved justice and hated iniquity; for that reason I die in exile.”²⁹

²⁷ Wilken, 30

²⁸ Coffin, 46-47.

²⁹ Wilken, 30

The Church after Gregory's death

What would become of the Church, particularly the reform of the Church after Gregory's death? This answer would greatly rely on the next person to be elected as Pope. Would this person continue on with Gregory's agenda, or would he create an all new one? Gregory's successor was Victor III, someone who would be much milder than Gregory with little desire to compete for the supreme authority. As Pope Victor lived for only one year and was succeeded by Urban II. He took up where Gregory had left off. What was different about Urban from Gregory is that he wanted to conciliate the king and his party and to facilitate their return to the views of the ecclesiastical party. But Henry refused to cut his ties with the antipope, whom he elected after Gregory excommunicated him for the second time. The antipope's bishops abandoned him to answer to Urban. Urban had now renewed the excommunication of Henry in 1094 followed by Guibert (the antipope) in 1095.

Urban passed away in 1099 and was succeeded by a less able ruler, Paschal II. At first Henry had refused to recognize the new pope. Henry was gaining back his support in Germany and began to fight for the removal of his excommunication. He even went so far as to publicly declare his intention of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. This would not satisfy the pope and he demanded the renunciation of the right of investiture. Until his death, Henry untiringly defended the inherited rights of the royal office and never sacrificed any of them. The investiture controversy continued on for decades, which included "after the 1122 Concordat of Worms formally ended investiture [...]"³⁰

It seems that Gregory had an influence on the Church and was able to create the beginnings of his reform. He was able to do far more than his predecessor reformers.

³⁰ Wilkens, 47.

Sadly enough he was not able to achieve his largest goal, ending lay investiture. He had wanted to bring a separation between the Church and the State, a separation he felt was greatly needed in order for the Church to be reformed to the ways without greed and barbaric rulings.

The question is did Gregory have right to that goal? Did he have the right to take away a power inherited for centuries by kings and princes? A task that was rarely even questioned by anyone either on the Church's side or the States side, in fact it wasn't really ever heavily questioned until the time of the Gregorian reformers. So what gave them this sudden right to try and abolish lay investiture from the states? Reformers felt that this power should be solely left to the church, particularly to the pope, because any church matter should only be left to the Church. Now if this bishop was not going to represent the Church in a manner that suits it, then a Pope should have some say into the appointment of that bishop, but to take away the right completely from a king or prince is wrong.

To me it didn't seem to be a bad thing for the power to be divided between the Church and the State. The Church was being taken over by barbaric, money hungry men and kings and princes that only cared for their wallets. But if this were true, then why was it that most of the Church's funds were coming from the kings and that the defenders of the Church were in fact the kings and his states? What harm occurred if the kings appointed bishops and attain a few churches on their land, They didn't seem to be gaining much by sending money on to the Church and being the ones to go and defend them with their own armies.

Gregory seems to be a reformer that took his power within the Church and tried to abolish all other power that was not within the Church. He did so without a concern for others and thought that whatever action he took within the Church was right because his actions were told to him by God and God could do no wrong, so in turn he could do no wrong. Gregory took an attitude that had angered many, and what might have caused him to fail in the reform. True he was able to enact decrees that denounced lay investiture, but those decrees did not stop anyone, particularly King Henry from continuing to appoint bishops. Gregory might have been supported by more had he taken a different approach in his actions, but because he did them with very little consultation from others, he soon lost his support. It seemed that Gregory was no better than those that he opposed.

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